



THE NEW AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOLS STUDY

*Study to assess how the practices of the
New American High Schools are
affecting student outcomes*

BACKGROUND

THE NEW AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

The New American High Schools (NAHS) Study is a longitudinal research project, funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The overall goal of this effort is to document the practices and outcomes of a group of high schools engaged in whole-school improvement efforts in order to inform both policy debate and improve secondary education.

The NAHS Study is part of the New American High Schools Initiative. Launched in 1996, this research-based Initiative recognizes high schools that are committed to high standards for all students and can demonstrate excellent results. The New American High Schools include comprehensive schools, magnet schools, redesigned vocational/technical schools, theme schools, pilot schools, and alternative schools. An important part of the Initiative is to conduct research on and evaluation of the practices and student outcomes at these schools.

MPR ASSOCIATES AND THE RESEARCH TRIANGLE INSTITUTE

MPR Associates, Inc. of Berkeley, California, and its subcontractor, the Research Triangle Institute of North Carolina are conducting the NAHS Study, under the sponsorship of the U.S. Department of Education.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

The current phase of the NAHS Study started in 1999 and is scheduled to be completed in 2004. Surveys measuring contextual factors, school processes and practices, and student outcomes will be administered annually, with the first administration in 2000. Site visits will be conducted periodically, beginning in the fall of 2000. For schools participating in a substudy, student-level data collection and site visits will commence in the spring of 2001. Interim publications that report findings will be prepared annually, culminating with a final report in 2004.

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

GOAL

The overall goal of the NAHS Study is to contribute to debate and education policy making on high school improvement by analyzing the ways in which the New American High Schools are raising student achievement.

OBJECTIVES

Specifically, the NAHS Study seeks to

- ★ Involve the New American High Schools in designing the study to ensure its usefulness and value to schools.
- ★ Document the experiences of the New American High Schools in implementing and sustaining whole-school improvement.

*OBJECTIVES
(CONTINUED)*

- ★ Assess 1) the overall effectiveness of the New American High Schools in improving student outcomes, and 2) the variation in student outcomes by subgroups, such as differences in the achievement of at-risk and other students.
- ★ Assist schools participating in the study to improve their own practices and outcomes.
- ★ Support the New American High Schools Initiative by regularly providing the Department of Education with information on practices and outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

*QUANTITATIVE AND
QUALITATIVE DATA*

Through the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data using surveys, student transcripts, administrative data, review of written materials, and site visits, the Study will thoroughly describe the settings, practices, and outcomes of the New American High Schools.

*IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF A
SUBSET OF THE
NEW AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOLS*

In addition, researchers will collect detailed information from students and teachers in a subset of schools to measure differences in outcomes between subgroups of students. The study team will also conduct visits to these schools to collect qualitative information through interviews with principals, teachers, students, parents and community partners.

COMPARISON STRATEGY

By comparing the outcomes of New American High Schools and their students with the outcomes of similar schools and students, the Study will assess the effectiveness of practices used at the New American High Schools. A number of nationally representative databases will be used to construct comparison groups.

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